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# THE MONIST

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## THE BELIEF IN THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS AND ITS PERMANENT SIGNIFICANCE.<sup>1</sup>

### INTRODUCTION.

THE disciples, plunged into fear and terror by the crucifixion of their master, kept themselves concealed from their enemies during the first stages of anxiety. But after a short time they gathered again and faced the persecutions of the princes of the world with the bravery of lions. Poor fishers and men of the common people, without intellectual standing or higher culture, lacking all outward elements of power, they conquered the world solely by virtue of their faith. The Church founded upon this faith embraces to this day, or better, embraces already, one third part of mankind. All civilised races are running in the paths of Christianity, or are turning toward these paths. These are striking facts, but historically incontestable.

Now what was the content of the faith promulgated by the disciples, which for the last two thousand years has pursued its ever-widening triumphal course through the world? Jesus is risen and has been raised by God to be ruler of his kingdom and in time to come judge of the world in God's stead! Resurrection and ascen-

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<sup>1</sup> Translated from Professor Schwartzkopff's MS. by W. H. Carruth.

sion! These from the very beginning of Christianity constitute the real content of its Gospel. It is the belief in the risen Jesus ascended to the right hand of God, which has conquered the world. There must be in this belief, therefore, an effective religious force with which no other on earth can be compared. But in what does this lie?

If we wish to obtain pure gold we must first separate the slag from it. The divine, the innermost content and highest goal of the truly human, always appears in history involved in human forms. Being more or less superficial these possess for the divine kernel at most but the significance of a hull. Their function is to preserve and transmit it. But they must be removed if we are to attain perfect clearness regarding the kernel itself. A man is crucified and laid away in the grave. He rises out of the grave on the third day and walks upon his feet. He appears to his friends, shows those who doubt his bodily reality that he is no ghost, but has flesh and bone, mingles with them and finally leads them up into a mountain. Thence he rises into the air before their eyes, and disappears behind a cloud. What a precious kernel! What a childish hull!

There are still Christians even in Germany, as recent events show, who are unable in this matter also to distinguish between hull and kernel. They accuse those who undertake to purify the gold of its slag of depreciating the gold. Shall we allow these pious but unintelligent people to persuade us to call the slag pure gold? Or on the other hand, shall we throw away the gold? It is not to be denied that the belief in the resurrected and risen Christ appeared among the early Christians in the childish conceptions of their time and people. They were not able to free themselves entirely from sense and materialism in their view of Christ's resurrection. Can we wonder at this, when it is not yet entirely possible for many Christians even two thousand years later? Yet it will be possible to show that these sensual conceptions are not really the force which has brought a world to the feet of Christianity. This power was due alone to the divine reality which was hidden under such views. And nothing but this can accomplish the same work

to-day. What this force is I now propose as a theological specialist to explain in outline to the readers of this journal.

In order to do this we must first of all make clear the meaning which the contemporaries of Jesus attached to the resurrection in general, and next establish the facts in connexion with the resurrection of Jesus. Both of these are historical phenomena. Accordingly they are to be ascertained in but one way, that of historical investigation.

#### THE CONTEMPORARY MEANING OF THE CONCEPT OF THE RESURRECTION IN GENERAL.

Let us first examine the sense in which the contemporaries of Jesus conceived the idea of a resurrection in general. All primitive Christians understood by it the reanimation of the material body, followed by a certain transfiguration of it and by the real act of resurrection as a bodily rising and coming forth from the grave. In all this the body remained, in the thought of the people, more or less material. Furthermore, the resurrection of pious Israelites implied in the Messianic theory the entrance into the kingdom of consummation, the transfigured earthly realm of the future king of the chosen people. This kingdom was to come with the last day, that is, at the moment of the consummation of the world, when God established it through the Messiah (John xi. 24).

The idea of the resurrection of the earthly body and a subsequent transfiguration has accordingly no claim to be regarded as an independent revelation of Jesus Christ. On the contrary, he found it already existent as a Pharisaic tradition. It is beyond question that he accepted this idea in the main, as he received from the Pharisees essentially their whole body of views regarding the kingdom of God. Nevertheless there is need of examining in detail how far such conceptions, which were transmitted to Christ from an imperfect stage of revelation, are authoritative, for of themselves they cannot possibly make any such claim. Consider, for instance, the notion of evil spirits ('dæmons') likewise adopted by Christ, and certainly not merely as a matter of conformity. If we were to put without qualification the knowledge of divine things which God

has given to Jews and heathens on a par with the special revelation of God made by Christ, we should be assailing the unique value of the latter.

JESUS'S PROPHECY OF HIS RESURRECTION AND THE DISCIPLES' NOTION OF IT.

As opposed to the above considerations it might be urged that Jesus prophesied his own resurrection in the popular sense, and that this necessarily gives a higher significance to the notion of the resurrection. How far this assumption is correct can be estimated only by examining this prophecy at least briefly. Whether any importance attaches to the details of the form in which it appears in the synoptic Gospels may remain an open question. But it is a fact that Jesus prophesied something of the sort. This cannot be denied, and this is really what is important.

Our Lord could not but expect his resurrection, for he was conscious of being a pious man in close communion with God. Now God is not a god of the dead, but of the living. Through the love by which Jesus was most intimately united to God, he shared in the love of God. He felt that his intercourse from person to person received by virtue of this love great worth even in the eyes of God. How then could he have expected to remain in death?

But more than this: Jesus was conscious not only of being a pious man, but of being the Messiah of Israel, the king of the coming kingdom of God, in God's stead and with God's authority. Now in the view of the Jews of that time it was for the Messiah (as "Jinnon") to bring about the resurrection of the other pious dead. But in case he died before the completion of this work of salvation he must necessarily, as head of this kingdom, first rise from the dead himself before he could accomplish the resurrection of the others. (This must suffice here concerning the communion of Christ with God. We shall return to the subject later.)

The especially faithful might enter Paradise, or "Abraham's bosom," even before the resurrection of their bodies. But into the kingdom of perfection to come only one door opened: the resurrection. In the opinion of that time this was the only manner in which

one could share in true immortality, that is, eternal life in the kingdom of God. Thus Christ on the cross promises the thief to be with him in Paradise "this day," but is not to be resurrected until the third day.

Is it an occasion of surprise that even Christ regarded this entrance to the perfect life after death as a bodily resurrection from the dead? What is religion? Is it the inner life of the moral personality in God? Or is it the knowledge of certain outward forms by which one may attain to this life? Christ possessed even here on earth the divine life in the greatest perfection accessible to mere man. He was therefore on the strength of his present experience absolutely sure of this life in communion with God for the future also. How the transition to the transfigured state of the kingdom of God was to take place in detail was from the ethico-religious point of view a matter of indifference. For Jesus it assumed the form of the Pharisaic notion of the resurrection which tradition gave him.

He had no occasion to examine it critically, for it was flexible enough to contain without wronging it the religious thought revealed to him by his Father. But for this very reason Christ's authority cannot be appealed to without argument for the complete correspondence of this Pharisaic view with the reality.

In this connexion we can understand also why Christ made no changes even in certain more important features of that Pharisaic view. There must needs have been some especial occasion for making such changes.

And so, when he prophesied his own resurrection, he could scarcely refer it to any other period than the dawn of the kingdom of perfection. From of old the prophets had set this kingdom of perfection at the end of their own time; the generation in which they lived was to look for it. But Christ was the first to have the complete inner justification for such an assumption, for he was conscious that with him the Messianic time had come, at least the foundation and dawn of it (Luke iv. 21; x. 23; xvii. 21). He himself in his own lifetime brought in the kingdom of God, at least inwardly (Matt. xii. 28; xvii. 26). How then should he con-

ceive the thought that between the dawn and the completion of this kingdom thousands of years might pass! He was no historical specialist of the nineteenth or twentieth century. Even Paul, perhaps the best educated and far-seeing theologian of his time, expected almost steadfastly the dawn of the kingdom and the return of the Lord in his own time. And yet he intended personally to convert beforehand the principal leaders of paganism in the known world of his time. With how much more reason might Christ expect his own return for the establishment of the kingdom in his own generation (Mark ix. 1, etc.), especially since, following the older prophets, he seems to have conceded the admission of the heathen to this kingdom only as a result of this sudden and mighty demonstration of divine power (Luke xvii. 24). At least the son of man was to come again before his disciples should have entirely finished their missionary work in Israel (Matt. x. 23; Luke xviii. 8). The opinion that this return of Christ was partially fulfilled in the destruction of Jerusalem is a distortion of ideas wholly without foundation in the New Testament.

And although with reference to the time of his return he accepted the erroneous notion of all the prophets, and did so with more justification, this fact did not affect the truth of the religious content of that notion, which was, that Jesus is regarded as the Judge of the world. How justly can be shown only in the last section of this article, where we propose to examine more closely the belief in Jesus as a saviour.

It is sufficient to say that Christ, like the rest of the Jews, expected his resurrection on the Last Day. But he sets his resurrection for the third day. Accordingly this number is to be understood figuratively for a brief period, a symbolism which is not unusual in Christ's expressions elsewhere. Indeed, in the expression "the third day" he is plainly quoting the prophet Hosea, who also evidently meant his remark about a "revival after two days" and the "resurrection on the third day" in the more loose sense of a short time (Hosea vi. 1 ff.).

The disciples, indeed, in their childish superficiality could scarcely understand such a prophecy otherwise than literally. And

accordingly, when they had recovered their composure, they could not fail to expect its fulfilment, though of course with fear and trembling, on the third day.—In this we have been concerned first and foremost to prove that the notion of the early Christians and to some extent of Christ himself regarding the resurrection as of a bodily rising from the grave corresponded indeed with the contemporary notions of the Jews, but yet, considering the method of its origin, that it is by no means authoritative presumptively and in every point.

Having thus established the meaning of the notion of the resurrection, we must approach the historical facts on which the belief of the first Christians in the resurrection of their master was founded. Its two supports are, as may be shown, the empty grave and the apparitions of Christ.

#### THE EMPTY GRAVE AND THE RISING FROM THE GRAVE AS SUCH.

It is highly probable that the grave of Christ was found empty a short time after his crucifixion. Even though unessential details of the discovery of the open tomb are reported differently by the different Gospels, there is no doubt about the affair itself. How else should the rumor, reported by Matthew, have spread and persisted among the Jews, that the disciples had stolen away the body of Jesus? It would be meaningless if the fact of the removal from the tomb were not established. On the contrary, if the enemies of Jesus could have demonstrated his permanent continuance therein they would have done it, despite the Jewish dread of corpses, and especially the judges of Jesus, who by the public testimony of the disciples were thrown under urgent suspicion of being Messiah-cides. Only by showing the body in the tomb could they refute, and that at a single step, the announcement of the resurrection of Christ from the dead.

Moreover, the tomb must have been empty on the third day, for this point of time is regarded already by Paul as the day of the resurrection. And yet he can have received it only from the leaders of the young Christian congregation in Jerusalem, who must have known the facts in the case. And this would have been not later

than the occasion, about four years after the death of Christ, when he visited the "pillars," so-called, that is, the chief apostles, in Jerusalem.

But the belief in the resurrection could not rest upon the empty tomb alone. The Lord must also have appeared to his faithful ones on the third day. But an appearance of Christ while his body still lay in the grave would never have passed with the people and the disciples as a satisfactory proof of Jesus's resurrection from the grave, for, as we have already seen, the resurrection was for the people a resurrection from the grave.

The matter of the empty tomb is so much the more important, because we cannot show that the disciples who saw the apparition were no longer in Jerusalem on the third day. In so short a time they could scarcely have been in Galilee. And this is the only point in consideration, for the reports give all the apparitions as either here or in Jerusalem.

A hasty flight of the terrified disciples into Galilee, if indeed there were any historical foundation for it, must needs have taken place directly after the arrest of Jesus. Now the Scripture does indeed tell that the disciples were scattered after the arrest. Yet not only John, but Jesus's leading disciple Peter, ventured soon after into the very courtyard of the high priest, whither Jesus had been taken. And John, as well as his mother—mother also of the younger James—and other Galilean women were present at the crucifixion. It is not likely that their natural protectors were far away. Even if the most of them were at first dispersed, it is probable that they concealed themselves in Jerusalem or in the immediate vicinity.

In any case there was no ground for a headlong retreat. No violent hand was laid on either Peter or Paul at this time, when once the master had been taken into custody. Accordingly it is not likely that even Peter, despite his denial, fled directly after to his home.

And even if we admit the probability of this flight, he and his comrades cannot easily have reached their old home by the morning of the third day, nor indeed at any time on the third day. And

if, accordingly, the disciples were still in Jerusalem on the third day, then there is so much the surer proof that the tomb must have been found empty.

The question how Jesus's body came to be out of the tomb cannot be answered with certainty. If we do not accept a real bodily resurrection from the tomb, all that seems to me to be left is this. It is out of the question that any one from the more immediate circle of the disciples could have removed the body. What arrant deceivers they must otherwise have been! To attribute such an action to them would amount to an unwarranted calumny. The enemies of Jesus, on the other hand, were interested in seeing that the body remained in the tomb, for the removal would give rise to the before-mentioned penal difficulties for them. (Acts v. 28, 33.) It is barely possible that some one from the less immediate circle of the followers of Jesus may have done such a thing, in order, perchance, to obtain a sacred relic in the superstitiously revered body of the master. For even from his living body there proceeded a miraculous power according to the view of many of the common people (Luke viii. 46; Acts v. 15 and 19). Worship of this kind was nothing unusual in those times. But, as was said, certainty on this point is scarcely to be attained at this late day.

If, however, the body was not removed from the tomb in some mechanical way, then it seems as though nothing but the bodily resurrection could solve the riddle of the empty tomb. If only this notion did not itself involve such great difficulties! It is not, of course, a doubt of the omnipotence of God that troubles us. It is only a question whether it can be proven that God actually did cause his son to rise and come forth from the grave. A motive for this course would seem very plausible in the desire of the Almighty to justify him as the Messiah in the eyes of his followers. But did this actually take place?

If we could give full credence to every word of Scripture the question would be settled. But close examination shows that the various reporters of the story of salvation were by no means proof against every error of interpretation. And here lies the difficulty.

Not a single disciple was an eye-witness of the resurrection so

far as Scripture informs us. Rather, they were enabled to infer it merely from the fact of the empty tomb, as before remarked, and from the Christophany. And so it becomes a matter for the conscientious investigator to test the validity of these inferences. I shall return presently to the inference from the Christophany. Meantime I will consider briefly how a bodily resurrection from the grave, supposing that such really took place, is to be conceived. We will simply ignore the crudest conception of contemporary Judaism. In this the door of the tomb had first to be opened by an earthquake in order to make possible the exit of the body which was imagined in all too material a form; only after having come forth from the grave was the body transfigured according to the Jewish notion. But in what could the transfiguration consist?

In this view all the weight is laid without doubt upon the identity of the transfigured body with the body that was laid away in the grave. It does not recognise the question whether the living spirit of Jesus Christ might have received from God another and spiritual corporeity, or perhaps even a more spiritual organism. But yet we must have some clear notion in connexion with the transfiguration of the body that was laid in the grave; otherwise the word would be without meaning. And in any case it must in this view signify a transformation of the earthly elements into something celestial.

But how? The Church has always insisted upon the true humanity of Christ and accordingly of his body. Therefore the chief constituents of his inhumed body could have been only the same as in other men: carbon, nitrogen, water, lime, phosphorus, etc. Accordingly we should have to regard these elements as "transfigured." Now let some one suggest a reasonable meaning for such an expression; otherwise I do not see how such a transformation can escape the reproach of being meaningless. Either the oxygen, carbon, etc., must remain material, or they cease to be oxygen and carbon. But if these elements remain material, then it must be the same with the body composed of them. And if material, then perishable also, earthly, mortal. And yet we wanted to attain an immaterial, imperishable, celestial body.

On the other hand, if in place of these material elements and of the body composed of them there appear celestial elements and a celestial body, then we have something entirely new, which has nothing more to do with the old body. And thus the desired identity of the body is destroyed. Not, however, the identity of the spirit. But it appears to be self-contradictory that a material body should retain its identity and yet be transformed into an immaterial body. Accordingly there is a primary difficulty in the fact that one cannot, so far as I see, think of the resurrection of the body of Jesus that was entombed even as a transfigured body without absurdity.

This absurdity seems to be removed if we substitute, with Paul, for the transfigured material body a spiritual body, a dwelling from heaven (2 Cor. v. 1 ff.). True, the Apostle does not hold to this thought exclusively, for he did not entirely free himself from the accompanying notion of a change of the earthly body into a celestial body (1 Thess. iv. 17; 1 Cor. xv. 51 ff.). However, this other conception remains at least vague. If a body from the new world is to be organised upon us, it could consist only of potency-monads of a lower sort. These would be appointed to serve as medium of communication between spirits. But how else is one to conceive of such lower force-nuclei than as not purely spiritual entities,—that is, of a material nature, even though more refined?

However, there is difficulty in conceiving what need there can be for a body as intermediary substratum for a perfect spirit, even though it be finite. God, who is spirit, embraces and sustains the whole universe. Human spirits will, to be sure, remain forever finite. But yet they become perfect in their kind. And thus the operations of human spirits, even when transfigured, will remain relatively limited. But the necessity for a material medium of communication for them in a no longer material world is not evident.

Even in our material world the ultimate connexion of the spirit with the central nerve-termini is necessarily immediate. For the relation of the spirit with the material substratum which serves as

medium for its communication with the rest of the outer world cannot in its turn be mediate.

But even if a transformation of the material body of our Lord into a body of glory seems inconceivable, yet one does not like to think of the body of Jesus Christ as dissolving into its constituent atoms. It seems to us, because of our inherited views and feelings, like a sort of desecration, and yet there appears to be here too a vague thought at the bottom of the feeling. If Christ was true man, then he had flesh and blood such as we have; but flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, the perishable cannot take on immortality (1 Cor. xv. 50).

If, as the Gospels declare, the body of Jesus Christ received nourishment, grew, hungered and thirsted, was overworked and exhausted, and sank down half dead under the weight of the cross, then it was subject to all the transformations of perishable elements. Then, too, the ultimate complete exhaustion and dissolution of it in death was inevitable. Being human, Jesus was not only liable to die, but he must needs sometime die, unless God endowed him with a new and imperishable organism. It has long been established by the investigations of physical life that sin of itself does not cause the death of the body, though it may do much to hasten it. On the contrary, dissolution as such is a natural and necessary process. Transient elements cannot have immortal life. Death is the reward of sin, but eternal death, not natural death. Such a death betokens the complete separation of the human spirit from the source of life in God. It is sin alone which gives even to natural death its sting (1 Cor. xv. 56). In this deepest religious sense the Son of God could not die, even if he was compelled to leave behind this imperfect organ intended for communication with earth.

It is the sin of the world which gave to Christ's death also its fearful sting. His physical death and its necessary consequences cannot in themselves confuse us, for his living personality in God was entirely superior to his death. Indeed, the separation of the spirit from the perishable elements of the body is a condition to the entrance upon a higher sphere of life. Therefore it seems to

me that it is a right and a duty to put aside on this point all æsthetic and semi-sentimental feelings. With clear insight we must free ourselves from the opinion that the dissolution of the body of Christ into its earthly elements can involve any possible violation of the dignity of his divine personality.

Such an anxiety is permissible only for those who really reject the true humanity of the Son of God with its inevitable consequences, which is distinctly taught in the Bible. Indeed, there are many who assume, though perhaps without very clear notions of the subject, that the Son is one and the same person with God the Father. Of course from this point of view it is impossible that God the Father should pay the debt of mortality. But on the other hand it is utterly unbiblical to teach that the Son is the Father. The Father has no body, but is pure spirit. Thus and for this reason only is he in every respect superior to mortality. But Christ had a human body. Thus as true man he had, at the age of thirty-five, by the constant elimination of the material elements which he had taken up from his material environment, put off his entire body in all its essential parts some five times. Even if the bony parts endure somewhat longer, they are much less intimately associated with the imperishable essence of the spirit than are, for instance, the perishable nerves which are its immediate organ.

How then should any one take offence at the thought that the Lord finally laid aside his mortal body entirely, exchanging it for a perfect, celestial organism? Or is it any more in accord with the dignity of Christ that God permitted his body to be tortured to death than that he surrendered to the peace of the grave its lifeless hull, permitting there the dissolution of the perishable body to proceed to its natural end? Is not decay the natural result of all true death, of death that is not mere trance? If it can be proven that the body of Christ did not decay, I should be the last to deny it. But if this is not supported by incontestable certainty, then I cannot see why our Saviour, who as a true man became like us in every respect excepting sin, should not have shared the lot of all true men in this respect.

And even if natural death in itself were to be regarded as the

reward of sin, it is simply death itself. Even the Scripture says nothing of the sort of corruption. It is merely the natural consequence of death.

#### THE PLACE OF CHRIST'S APPEARANCES.

We have examined one of the supports upon which the contemporary form of the belief in the resurrection rests, I mean the fact of the empty tomb. At the same time we considered what the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the tomb must imply, in case it actually took place. But yet, the belief in the resurrection of the Lord would never have entered into the hearts of the disciples, if there had not been another support for it. And this other seems indeed to be much more forcible than the first; I refer to the appearances of Christ to his followers. We come now to consider these specifically.

It may be accepted to-day as settled that various disciples and Paul also had real Christophanies. The only question is, of what nature these appearances were, and when and where they occurred. In this point the recorded accounts present unfortunately very considerable difficulties. As for the place of the first appearances, it is well known that they were in Galilee according to Mark and Matthew; but in Jerusalem according to Luke, the Acts, and John xx. The twenty-first chapter of the Gospel of John, the body of which was appended somewhat later, does indeed contain references to later appearances in Galilee. However, this does not affect the argument for our purpose inasmuch as only those Christophanies are to be considered which could have influenced the origin of the belief in the resurrection. The attempt has been made to harmonise these opposing reports by connecting them with "as well as." But it should be observed that both the Galilean appearances in Matthew and those in Jerusalem in Luke and John xx. claim to be first appearances. Matthew reports the disciples as seeing the resurrected Christ upon the Galilean mountains, whither they were directed to go by the angels that announced his resurrection (xxviii. 16ff.). But according to Luke the Lord appears on the very day of the resurrection to the disciples at Emmaus (chap.

xxiv. 13 with 1); these start the very hour that Jesus takes leave of them (33) to return to Jerusalem. And here they find the eleven assembled in the evening of the same day, who report to them the appearance to Peter as something that had already occurred (34). But even while they are speaking the Lord himself appears among them (36). After demonstrating that he is alive, he gives them his last authoritative directions for their preaching the Gospel—"beginning from Jerusalem unto all nations." He commands them expressly to remain meanwhile in Jerusalem until they shall receive power from on high for their calling (49). This they received, it will be recalled, at Pentecost. And then, with an easy change of subject the account goes on, literally: "And he led them out unto opposite Bethany, and lifting up his hands he blessed them. And it came to pass, while he was blessing them, that he withdrew from them. And they for their part returned to Jerusalem with great joy, and lingered continually in the temple, praising God." (50-53.) The connexion here shows every unprejudiced reader that this separation of the Lord from them, after giving them his last missionary injunctions and blessing them, is intended to be final, in a word, his ascension. And this is confirmed by the concluding paragraph of the book, which reports in general their further course, to-wit, that in accordance with the command of the Lord they waited (until Pentecost) in the temple at Jerusalem. Thus for the Gospel of Luke any first appearances in Galilee before Pentecost are absolutely precluded.

John too, in the twentieth chapter, places the appearance to the eleven on the day of the resurrection and in Jerusalem (19). Then indeed he tells of a second appearance to the eleven in the presence of Thomas in the same place. The Acts also has Jesus appear to his followers during the forty days after Easter, but also gives them express command not to leave Jerusalem before the reception of the holy spirit.

Thus the two versions, Matthew on the one hand, and Luke and the Acts on the other, are mutually exclusive. It is not possible to harmonise the Gospels of Matthew and of Luke in this point. One can make up his mind either that the actual and orig-

inal appearances of Christ took place in Jerusalem or in Galilee. A recently renewed attempt of the Middle Ages, lacking adequate foundation, locates "Galilee" as a tavern for Galileans on the Mount of Olives, but it must be regarded, unfortunately, as a failure.

Now if the disciples were, as we found, in Jerusalem on the day of the resurrection, we shall be compelled to assume that Luke was right, and that the first appearances took place there. Later appearances in Galilee are not precluded by this. But those which influenced the belief in the resurrection took place in Jerusalem.

#### THE NATURE OF THE CHRISTOPHANIES.

Now, however, we shall be obliged to subject the appearances themselves to a closer examination. The oldest source, reaching back to the reports of eye-witnesses, is the Apostle Paul. He collects at the beginning of the familiar fifteenth chapter of 1 Corinthians the reported appearances (1 Cor. xv. 3; Gal. i. 18) and his own. These are historically established. (Here the various interpretations of some of them have no weight.) Of these the appearances of the Lord to Peter and the eleven are confirmed further by the synoptics, and the last by John as well.

Of the other appearances which the evangelists report, some may be doubtful. If, for instance, as according to the close of the Gospel of Luke,—not, indeed, in the Acts, which here is in strong contradiction with Luke,—Christ finally ascended into heaven on Easter day, then the appearance to Thomas on the Sunday after Easter falls to the ground.

As for the nature of the Christophany, the notion of Paul is more consistent and logical than those of the evangelists, especially of the synoptics. Paul, as we have already seen (1 Cor. xv. 44 ff.), in accordance with the incidents of his conversion near Damascus, has the Lord appear in a spiritual body. Indeed, he ventures frankly to describe the transfigured one as "the spirit" (2 Cor. iii. 17). Contrasted with this the conception of the less cultured primitive Christians, which finds expression in the Gospels, shows a mixture of material and spiritual features, according probably with the Pharisaic notion on the subject. Squarely material and in striking

contrast to the idea of Paul is the view of Christ's transfigured body which represents the Lord as not only having Thomas feel of him, but as even eating of a baked fish, and this for the very purpose of proving that he was no spirit, but had flesh and bones (Luke xxiv. 40-43; John xx. 24). Every thinking person must see the consequences of this. The object of Christ's demonstration is quite clear here, that is, to show that his transfigured body in its organs and its functions was entirely similar to his former material body. It has flesh and bone, and therefore a muscular and an osseous system, and this in reality and not merely in appearance. To deny this would be ascribing a deception to Christ. In like manner, his eating cannot be regarded as fictitious. But for real eating of material food the well-known organs are indispensable which provide for its reception, digestion, and elimination. So we have to do with actual metabolism, and this, as we have already seen, is the very expression of the perishableness of the elements of the body itself. For if they were not perishable they would neither require nor permit metabolism. And thus the body itself is shown to be perishable and mortal. This in turn is in radical contradiction with the assumption of a transfigured corporeity, which in its very nature must preclude all transitoriness.

But such a view is not to be reconciled with certain other attributes ascribed by the same reporters to this same body without being conscious of the impossibility of such a combination. For on the other hand, this material body possesses also purely spiritual characteristics. It passes through closed doors, and is in places far removed from each other at the same or nearly the same moment. Although it suddenly stands among them, it vanishes just as suddenly (Luke xxiv. 34, 35, 36 and 31; John xx. 19). I will say nothing of the fact that the Lord seems even on occasion to assume the form, garb, and bearing of another person, as in the account of the appearance to the disciples at Emmaus.

But this much appears already as incontestable, that the gospel of salvation cannot be based upon the veracity of such mutually contradictory utterances. In fact, the true faith in the resurrection cannot suffer any real harm even from such absurd notions. But

even from this point of view there is no advantage to be found in such confused conceptions as compared with greater clearness of perception. Yet at the same time such contradictions in the view of the primitive Christians with reference to the appearances as are expressed in the reports of the evangelists lead to this highly important conclusion: The reliability of their interpretation of the events of Easter must be recognised as having its limitations. Thence arises for thoughtful Christians of our time the duty of penetrating as far as possible into the indisputable historical germ of the matter by honest investigation of the case and comparison of the differences and contrasts in the accounts.

Perhaps the assumption will be made that the view of the actual witnesses of the resurrection has been somewhat dimmed by the report of the evangelists. But in any case the clearness of the other witnesses of the Christophanies can scarcely have been so great as that of the Apostle Paul, for he is conceded to be one of the most gifted and cultured minds of his time. And yet we cannot ascribe even to him an absolutely authoritative opinion on the question whether the Christophanies represented inward or outward realities.

We here touch the deepest point of the primitive Christian view of the nature of the Christophanies. A man of our time who understands anything of psychology will scarcely agree with Paul in the notion that the spirit of a living man can be snatched out of his body up into the third or seventh heaven. And yet he is positive that this happened to him in the course of his visions and revelations. He is in doubt only as to whether his body was perhaps taken along (2 Cor. xii. 2-4). Such then is his conception of the ecstatic vision. Will he be able to answer positively for the outward reality of a Christophany which befell him as he lay prostrate on the earth deprived of the power of sight (Acts ix. 4, 9)? Or may not, here too perhaps, an inward appearance or so-called "vision" have occurred?

The chief difficulty in conceding at least the possibility of this lies in a confusion of ideas which has not yet been wholly overcome. The fact is ignored that the expression "vision" determines

nothing whatever with regard to the actual reality of its content. Whether this is real or imaginary is a question which has nothing to do with the formal character of the vision as such. There are real thoughts and false thoughts; real dreams and false dreams. Now a vision is a sort of dream experienced in a waking state. The dream is a notion which has become embodied through intense spiritual absorption. If there is a reality corresponding to it, then the dream contains truth; otherwise not. There are dreams of the conscience, dreams of revelation, prophetic dreams. Their truth is precisely the same as if their thought-content should meet the spirit when awake. Thus a vision of Christ to the Apostle Paul may have been the expression of the actual state of affairs, to wit, that the Messiah, transfigured by death, had been perfected unto his celestial glory. In that case the truth revealed to Paul was not less, but rather the same as though Christ had met him in bodily form. Even the latter evidence was only an objective confirmation of the testimony implanted by God in the heart, that Christ had not remained in death, but had been taken up into heaven as the living Messiah. Only faith could implant this testimony. Otherwise the disciples might have seen in this appearance only a delusive vision of him who is able to clothe himself in the garb of light. Here too the revelation of Christ as such could be only an inward one. Therefore Paul rightly characterises it as one "within" him (Gal. i. 16). Hence this alone gives to the appearance its unique significance. The Apostle recognises that his calling is firmly founded upon that divine influence upon his heart, and not upon the presentation of the same before his sensual eye. (1 Cor. ix. 1.) It is this which ranks his Christophany as of equal value with those of the immediate eye-witnesses. Of course it is not claimed that the Apostle made this abstract distinction with complete clearness. But yet there lies in the revelation of God which came to and converted the heart of Paul the feature which gives to his Christophany its religious value.

Accordingly, while the correctness of Paul's opinion regarding the psychological form of his Christophany may be called in question, the fact of the resurrection in the sense of the victory over

death and the Messianic perfection of Christ is not affected by such a doubt. And it is this content which makes the vision, if we must assume one, an objective vision. For a merely subjective vision, that is, a mere human fancy instead of the supernatural reality of an actual revelation of God is not to be thought of. The objectivity of the revelation is, as will appear later, guaranteed by the divinity of the personality of Christ himself.

True, our knowledge of supernatural things is too imperfect to warrant an unqualified denial of the possibility that Christ may have appeared to the disciples and Paul in bodily form, notwithstanding all the objections which we have considered. But even if this really happened, historical certainty on the subject, as we have seen, is no longer to be attained, for it has been shown that even the Apostle Paul was not qualified to give an authoritative opinion on such matters. Therefore, even if this fact may have had a certain importance for the first disciples, this importance cannot be the same for us, in view of the uncertainty of the facts in the case.

To be sure, if the apparitions were only inward, there is an error involved on the part of the witnesses, but not, as we have seen, an error that touches the religious fact. This remains the same, in one case or the other. The error would touch only the psychological opinion regarding the nature of the appearance of a given revelation which in either case is inwardly true. But no such purely psychological error could possibly cause any material harm in respect of religion. For instance, the general error of the primitive Christians in expecting that Christ would come again in their own generation did religion no considerable harm. On the contrary, the constraint of so living as if the judge might appear at the door any day gave to their faith and life a deeply serious and heroic, if somewhat fantastic, character.

The following consideration might also lead to the acceptance of an objective vision as the form in which God may have given to the first Christians the revelation of the resurrection. Even the possibility of the appearance of a spiritual body seems open to certain especial objections. I will refrain from considering here the

already mentioned difficulties connected with such a body in itself. In any case, a revelation of it to earthly men would needs take place in the same way in which as pure spirit Christ would make himself known. But if we conceive of the spiritual body as a reality of organically combined spiritual activities and functions, having in the personal spirit their comprehensive and unifying source and central substratum, then it appears to be entirely possible that this spirit shall affect the heart and conscience of earthly men from within and reveal its spiritual life to them thus. It is thus that God always works, as a spirit. In the acceptance of this influence lies the receptive side of faith. Then the "objective vision" would represent the sensual reflex of that faith in the heart.

But how is it possible for a spirit so to affect from without the sensual side of man that the resulting outward image shall express its true nature? True, the human spirit still dwelling in the body is able to make itself understood to one of its own kind from without, and to incite it to the creation of images by means of sensual stimulants. These represent its nature in certain respects; not, to be sure, as it is absolutely, but they enable it after all to manifest itself symbolically. But it will be different with a spirit perfected to celestial perfection. For such a one will not be able to express its deepened and elevated nature by the same sensual and earthly symbols with even approximate adequacy. On the contrary, he could express it to an earthly man evidently only with the most inadequate symbolism. But under these circumstances what advantage has the appearance of a spirit from without over its influence from within?

Why is so much stress laid anyway upon the exterior manifestation as such? Is the deepest and highest reality to be found in the outward world, as the materialists maintain? Is it not rather within? Is the physical life superior to that of the spirit? Only a presumption to this effect would support such an unqualified precedence of the outward as compared with the inward reality.

After all that has been here said this much is evident, that the significance and the permanent value of the belief in the resurrection cannot lie in the manner in which the resurrection was accom-

plished, or in which Christ appeared to his followers. Whether Christ's body dissolved in the tomb into its earthly elements, as in time our own will do; or whether he came forth from the tomb in a semi-material or spiritual body; whether he revealed himself to his disciples outwardly or only inwardly, cannot be proven positively historically and psychologically, that is, in the only way customary among us. Indeed there appear in this connexion for the unprejudiced thinker difficulties of detail, even impossibilities and absurdities. But whether it was thus or thus, the permanent significance of the belief in the resurrection is not in these details, and cannot be. Accordingly it is in order at the close to consider wherein this permanent significance really consists. To do so requires scarcely more than a collocation of the thoughts brought forward in the preceding pages.

#### THE PERMANENT SIGNIFICANCE OF THE BELIEF IN THE RESURRECTION.

The belief in the resurrection is at bottom the very same faith which the disciples had before the resurrection. Afterwards as before it centers in the Messiahship of Jesus. Only with it that faith assumed its complete form. Consequently, if we wish to attain a clear conception of the belief in the resurrection, we cannot evade examining briefly the nature of the belief in Jesus in general. Faith proper is recognised as being a religious conception. Therefore in this sense man can have faith in God alone, and in Christ only in so far as we see in him the mediator of salvation, the perfect instrument of the revelation of God.

It cannot be denied that God had instruments for his revelation before Christ. Moses, the prophets, Socrates, and Buddha were such. But the revelation which Buddha had to offer the world, made indeed in the very might of Him who creates all good, was predominantly ethical. Its religious springs lay within the realm of the unconscious, and accordingly these sources have almost gone dry. The weak, specifically religious instinct degenerated into pantheism and polytheism.

The divine voice which spoke in Socrates, likewise, was to some extent more an inspired, practical instinct than a pronounced, ethico-religious authority. And his notions of the unity of God and of the true life after death have from the start an individual stamp which prevented their exercising an extensive inspiring force. Thus no real religion sprang from the philosophical system of the practical, ethical thinker of Greece any more than from the anti-social renunciation of the world preached by the aristocratic Indian.

In Christ alone do we meet historically a divine consciousness of unmatched depth, earnestness, purity, and confidence, consciousness of God resting not alone upon thought and feeling, but dominating the entire volition, and expressing itself in life and action. The very spirit of God assumed flesh in this marvellous man. The religious consciousness of the historical Jesus as presented to us in the writings of the New Testament is such that he appears to be the only man in history, who in prayer and in faith recognised as a father the spirit who pervades, sustains, maintains, animates, and guides the universe. And the unique character of the relation we here observe consists, to look at it more closely, in the fact that the fatherhood of God fixes and characterises in its very foundation the relation of Christ to him. And yet he does not regard this filial relation as his especial privilege, although he does not find it realised in any other human being. True, he knows himself to be the sole knower and revealer of the divinity, but for this very reason he saw himself called to bring his followers into that relation of intimate personal communion with God (Matt. xi. 27). Thus he teaches his disciples to address God as "Father" in their prayers, and commands them to become perfect even as their Father in heaven is perfect.

While we cannot here go into this subject more deeply, what has been said is sufficient to show that Jesus, in calling God "Father," thereby expresses his perfect confidence of his election and of the protection and love of God with reference to himself. He experiences this love in his heart; it pervades his whole life, prompts his will, impels him to his every act. In it he thinks, lives, moves,

and has his being ; it is the native element of his piety, which consists in perfect filial faith, that is, in resignation to that love with all his powers, mind, spirit, and will (Mark xii. 30). In this faith he finds the strength for his perfect life of love unto his death. Every unbiassed judge finds the key to Jesus's wonderful life as we have it displayed in all essential respects in unimpeachable passages in the Gospels to be in this perfect and absolutely unalloyed union with God.

This unique experience of God accordingly gives him that lofty prophetic consciousness which the "meek and lowly of heart" unquestionably possesses (Matt. xi. 29). True, he never parades the loftiness of his personality, as does Buddha, who with all his excellence is not to be acquitted of all arrogance. And this is quite in accordance with the difference in the basic attitude of the respective religions. Buddha is conscious of having the highest principle of the world within himself. Whether there is beyond this a personal God he leaves an open question. In consistency he would have to deny it. In fact, he must regard himself, the self-conscious personality, as the saviour of the unconscious universe. For without consciousness there is no salvation. And the foundation-principle of the world is unconscious. True, on the other hand, the goal of salvation is the return to the state of unconsciousness. But surely a religion without humility lacks its living soul.

Christ, on the other hand, knows his perfect dependence on God, the sustainer of his whole being. He came to do not his own, but God's will. To this he submits in the most fearful torments, and even when he can no longer comprehend it! He summons men to himself only in order to lead them to God, the father of all, who, though in a higher sense, is also his own father. His whole function in life consists in nothing else than in accomplishing the salvation willed by his Father.

Now this calling makes him the founder, initiator, and vicarious ruler of the kingdom of God. But in the spiritual figure of the Son of Man, who appears before the "ancient of days" in the clouds of heaven, and who receives from God himself out of heaven the commission as vicar of God's rule, he finds the prophetic sym-

bol of his mission. And so he recognises himself as the Son of God with reference to his primal union with God in love, but as Son of Man, Messiah, with reference to the divine commission to bring salvation. He is aware of this office, though in lowly self-consciousness.

Now this makes him the mediator between God and men, and at the same time the judge of the world. For if he alone is able to bring men into perfect communion with God, then only those can come to God who permit themselves to be brought by Christ. On the other hand, whoever denies Jesus to be the one sent by God must be denied also by the Father (Matt. x. 32 ff., 40 ff.). Therefore the judges who rejected him in their criminal condemnation are one day to receive the sentence of him who shall come in the clouds of heaven (Matt. xxvi. 64). (The form in which Jesus expected his return is of course without religious significance; hence all depends on the content of the same, that is, his actual position as judge of the world.) With this in mind, and in view of his approaching death, Jesus even gave the preference to this characterisation of himself as Son of Man. If by the decree of God he was slain by the enemies of God before the accomplishment of his work of salvation, there could not fail to follow a so much the more glorious realisation of it through the celestially transfigured Son of Man.

A similar inimitable consciousness is expressed at the celebration of the Last Supper which closely preceded his arrest. We may ignore the especial form of the words spoken here. It remains beyond question that Jesus recognised in his death the means which was to seal that new covenant prophesied by Jeremiah (xxxi. 31 ff.) of perfect knowledge of God, union with God, and forgiveness of sins. In this very spirit Jesus proposes to yield up his life, "a ransom for many" (Mark x. 45).

Now such a self-consciousness is either justified or it is presumption carried to the verge of blasphemy. But presumption would cut the very roots of the religious life of the most religious man, which would be in itself a riddle. It would be still more inconceivable how the most extreme godlessness could become the

source of a religion of the greatest reverence, how a blasphemous untruth could become the origin of the purest truth and morality. But if we concede the validity of Christ's claim to that station, the conclusion is inevitable at the same time that none but a morally perfect man could make it. I cannot here enter upon a detailed demonstration of this fact, but I could not abstain from displaying the picture of the moral and religious personality of Christ in its elements, in order to be in a position to appreciate what the belief in Christ, and consequently also the belief in his resurrection signifies. The belief in Christ, then, appears to be the trusting surrender to Christ, as the divinely appointed mediator of perfect union with God, and accordingly the true king of the kingdom of perfection, and as the bringer of eternal life.

The assumption that the disciples could have lost this faith permanently in consequence of the crucifixion underrates the greatness of the impression which the saviour made upon them ; it would be thinking too lightly of the power of God over human hearts. Only the admission that the faith in Christ renewed by the spirit of God in the hearts of sincere disciples must needs triumph ultimately, despite its transient defeat, is consistent with our complete faith in the victorious majesty of the love of God in Christ. Even if Jesus had not appeared physically to his followers after his entombment, they could not possibly have lost permanently their faith in the genuineness of his unique divine mission, for the essence of their faith in Christ was sound. But, of course, only from one who had appeared to them after death, could they expect a return for the setting up of his kingdom. Otherwise their faith even at that stage would have burst the form of the popular Messianic expectation. And this would surely not have been done without danger. But the essence of their religious experience, that their master had brought them into communion with the personal God as with a father, would have demonstrated its genuineness by its invincible persistence, and this for the very reason that the revelation of the filial relation to God constitutes the permanent essence of his mission, and accordingly of the belief in the resurrection also. But the Christophanies and the empty tomb were a guarantee,

sensually first of all, of the continuance of the personal activity of the living and exalted mediator of salvation. Thus even these historical experiences of the disciples come to have a share in the religious content of the permanent faith in Christ.

Thus the faith of the disciples was resurrected as faith in the resurrection, and as a matter of course in the forms which the piety of that time had cultivated for this thought. Faith in the resurrection, then, arose upon the basis of the fact that God gave mankind the saviour in the personality of Christ, in whom was contained even while he lived the perfect revelation of God's salvation. This is the truth of the matter, the religious reality of the belief in the resurrection. The permanent significance of the resurrection lies in the demonstration of Christ's eternal mediatorship in salvation.

There is an historical value attached to the particular conceptual forms of this belief in the resurrection, for these constitute the natural vehicles through which they may be adopted by any given age. Now an eternal significance can belong only to a divine content. And this constitutes a genuine revelation. For where divine realities enter into the consciousness of men there the living personal God is at work. He in whom men live and move and have their being was alone able to revive in the hearts of the disciples the true faith in the imperishable calling of Jesus to be a saviour.

Whether the revelation was only inward, or whether perhaps outward also, only the inner one was absolutely indispensable, for faith exists only in the heart. True, this inward faith might receive an outward and sensuous support. But in any case, not simply the outward revelation, but the inward one as well, was the work of the spirit of God, without which no one can believe in Jesus and especially in the resurrected Jesus as his Lord (1 Cor. xii. 3). Thus convincing the disciples by an immediate influence upon their hearts of the eternal victory of their Master over death and sin, God laid the immovable foundation of the Christian Church.

In view of this, it does not appear that any conclusive weight is attached to the question whether the influence immediately emanating from God needs any other especial medium for its trans-

mission, or whether such is to be found in his continued activity in the hearts of the disciples in the way of the revival of their faith in Christ. The only matter of concern is that the influence proceeds from the living God. Even if this effect is brought about in some especial manner, nothing is thereby added to the vital point.

But if the personality of the living Christ in his function of mediator of salvation, which is not invalidated by death but is imperishable,—if this is the only true content of the belief in the resurrection, then the fate of his perishable body cannot possibly become a subject of serious concern in this connexion. Christ's permanent importance lies in the nature and work of his imperishable personality, and not in what becomes of his earthly and therefore perishable body after the soul of Christ had left it. Even if Christ came bodily from the tomb and appeared bodily to his disciples, this cannot add anything essential to the religious significance of the supernatural reality, which we hold by faith. Still less is a permanent significance to be attached to this outward fashion of historical occurrence. The resurrection of Christ from the tomb does not of itself even prove his sinlessness, still less his eternal mediatorship, which is to be judged not carnally, but spiritually.

But if Christ continued his existence, he could continue only as Christ. Accordingly there is involved for the disciples in the revelation of the resurrection of Christ the fact of the ascension as the ultimate goal of the resurrection of the Lord. Christ is now perfected as the eternal mediator between God and man upon the supreme stage of existence. Thus the resurrection and the ascension imply the perfection and the transfiguration of his function as saviour.

But finally the true significance of the resurrection of Christ, in so far as he is our saviour, extends also to our own resurrection and ascent to heaven. If the divine mediator had not arisen, but had remained among the dead, then we should have no guarantee that we too shall be exalted after death to a divine life. Upon him alone and his personality, therefore, rests the confident hope of eternal life for ourselves. It is this, and this alone, that Paul

means in that famous passage (1 Cor. xv. 14), by attaching all our salvation to the resurrection of Christ.

Philosophy cannot indeed deny the possibility of the continuation of human life after death, but neither can it demonstrate it as real. Not man the thinker, but man the believer, as an ethical personality, can receive such a revelation in the profoundest ethical depths of his nature. And only to the one perfectly good man, by virtue of his intimate communion with God, could this revelation be absolutely guaranteed, and not even to him the precise form of it. This belongs to another world, and therefore exceeds all human understanding. But Christ, as the only perfect believer, experiences the imperishable life of God himself as being his all-loving heavenly Father. And so, to those who receive in faith the divine life as it dwells in Christ, there is given through Christ and in Christ a perpetual guarantee of the imperishableness and the bliss of that life. In this lies for men the most glorious hope of eternal continuity. Christ alone is the resurrection and the life. Whoso believeth in him shall live even though he die.

(For a thorough scientific treatment and support of the positions here taken, I must refer to my writings, *Die Weissagungen Jesu Christi von seinem Tode, seiner Auferstehung und Wiederkunft*, Göttingen, Van den Hoek und Ruprecht, 1895, English translation, Edinburgh, 1897, and to my pamphlet, *Das Leben nach dem Tode*, Braunschweig, Wollermann, 1899.)

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